

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3 and 4 are presently active in this case. The foregoing amendment amends the specification and Claims 4 and 5, and cancels Claim 1. Claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form. Support for the amendment to Claims 4 and 5 can be found, for example, on page 26, line 24 – page 27, line 6 and figures 8, 9, 10, and 15. No new matter is added.

By way of summary, the outstanding Office Action presents the following issues: the specification was objected to for containing an embedded hyperlink; Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Grayson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,217, hereafter “Grayson”) in view of Gummel et al. (U.K. Pat. Appl. No. GB212876); Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Grayson in view of Sugiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,345,245, hereafter “Sugiyama”); and Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Grayson.

Regarding the objection to the specification, a replacement paragraph deleting the embedded hyperlink objected to in the outstanding Office Action is provided. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Grayson in view of Gummel, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Typically, actions performed by avatars in virtual space are actuated by a key displayed by a graphic on a video screen of a computing device. The user controlling the avatar selects one of numerous keys for any desired action to control the avatar accordingly. This control procedure is difficult for performing rapid control of the avatar such as during a real time chat. In such cases, users conducting chats with other users had to find and operate keys on the video screen to execute desired actions by the user’s avatars. This required the users to remove their hands from the keyboard in order to click keys on the video screen

assigned to specific actions of the avatars. This disruption tended to hamper the smooth input of the user's text in the virtual space¹.

In view of at least the above deficiency, the present invention is provided.

An exemplary embodiment of the present invention allows a user to control an avatar in a virtual space by typing strings of characters that correspond to recorded audio data. As the characters are typed, the avatar in the virtual space is made to appear to speak. As described in Figure 10, strings of characters such as, "good afternoon" correspond to sounds stored in specific locations such as, "sound space 1" in order to allow a user to input a string of characters and cause an avatar in a virtual space to utter an audible sound corresponding to the string of characters. Claim 2 recites, in part, "a correspondence table storing means for storing a correspondence table in which character data are made to correspond with audio data."

The outstanding Office Action relies on Gummel to provide the feature of correspondence tables with character data mapped to audio data. Gummel describes dictionary circuitry (20) containing ASCII code corresponding to selected message elements stored in a permanent memory region.² This dictionary circuitry holds ASCII code matched to message elements a user selects by controlling the energization of LED indicators (19) located in grid formed on a display unit (10). Thus, the dictionary circuitry in Gummel correlates ASCII code to selected grid elements.

In contrast, the table recited in Claim 2 contains character strings and corresponding audio data. Additionally, although Gummel does describe audio output, the output is generated by a synthesizer which receives ASCII code from the dictionary circuitry a single bit at a time over a serial data transmission line (21).³ Thus, the audio data is not in a table. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that for at least the reasons discussed above,

¹ See specification, p 4, line 21-p 5, line 4.

² See Gummel, P.2, Lines 13-22.

³ See Gummel, P2., Lines 18-22.

neither Gummel nor Grayson alone or in combination discloses all of the elements of Claim 2 or any claim depending therefrom. As amended Claims 4 and 5 also recite substantially similar limitations to that discussed above in a different statutory class and or differing claim scope. Thus, applicant respectfully submits that Claims 4 and 5 are patentably distinguished over the cited references for at least the same reasons as Claim 2.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. The outstanding Official Action relies on Sugiyama as providing the more detailed aspect of Claim 3. However, as Sugiyama is directed to dictionary management of local data processing systems for translating static files such as email, Sugiyama does not remedy the deficiencies of Grayson discussed above.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 3 be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Bradley D. Lytle
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 40,073

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

Scott A. McKeown
Registration No. 42,866